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ABSTRACT

This paper examines how the attitudes toward Victorian literature have changed through the years. After a brief introductory section, the paper presents a chronological bibliography of 44 general and specific anthologies dealing with Victorian literature, followed by detailed annotations for eight anthologies. Next, some observations of the shift in attitudes regarding Victorian writers are offered. The paper concludes with a bibliographic supplement of 65 collected works, essays, and criticism. (RS)

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# The Changing of the Guard:

## Attitudes in and Toward Victorian Literature as Shown Through Various Anthologies, 1876-1987.

by

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AN ESSAY

Submitted to the Department of English
Oakland University, Rochester, Michigan
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

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# Section 1

# Introduction

## Beginnings

This Thesis began as a conversation between Dr. Brian Murphy and myself in December 1987. I wanted to focus upon the Victorian age in my graduate work, and he agreed to act as advisor. We decided to trace the attitudes in and toward Victorian literature, choosing anthologies as the source.

The purpose of this Thesis is to see how attitudes toward Victorian literature have changed through the years. I used general anthologies, such as Norton or Oxford, and ones specifically related to Victorian literature. The Norton and Oxford anthologies are widely used at the college level, and are readily available in any bookstore. Further, they cover not only the Victorian era, but Romantic and Modern as well, and the editors tie these eras together.

I chose anthologies dealing with Victorian literature because they gave an editor's viewpoint on specifically that era. These works include Bowyer and Brooks, and Roe. The primary reason for choosing a particular anthology to study was its introduction to the age itself and the biographies of authors anthologized.

The Bibliographic Supplement contains a list of works I considered as part of my research, including collected works, essays, and criticism. I did not include them in the main research because they did not offer any editorial comments or introductions, and therefore I had no idea as to why that particular author / editor chose the works he did.

## Section 2

## Chronological Bibliography

**Chronological Bibliography**

**Late 1800's / 1920's**

Hale, Sara Josepa. A Complete Dictionary of Poetical Quotations: Comprising the Most Excellent and Appropriate Passages in the Old British Poets; and with Choice and Copious Selections from the Best Modern British and American Poets. Philadelphia: Claxton, Remsen, and Haffelfinger, 1876.

English Poetry. Ed. Charles Elliott, LL.D. Vol 3: From Tennyson to Whitman. New York: P.F. Collier & Son, 1896. 1969.

The Oxford Book of English Verse: 1250 - 1918. Ed. Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1901. 1939.

Standard English Poems: Spencer to Tennyson. Ed. Henry S. Pancoast. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1902.

Standard English Prose. Ed. Henry S. Pancoast. New York: Henry Holt and Company, no date given.

Manly, John Matthews. English Prose and Poetry. Rev. ed. Boston: Ginn and Company, 1907. 1938.

**1930's**

Victorian Prose. Ed. Frederick P. Mayer. New York: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1935.

Victorian Prose: A Book of Selections. Eds. Finley M.K. Foster, Ph.D and Helen C. White, Ph.D. New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1936.

Bowyer, John Wilson and John Lee Brooks. The Victorian Age:Prose, Poetry, and Drama. New York: Appleton - Century - Crofts, Inc., 1938.

**1940's**

Shafer, Robert. From Beowulf to Thomas Hardy. Vol 2. New York: The Odyssey Press, 1940.

Roe, Frederick. Victorian Prose. New York: The Ronald Press Company, 1947.

Seven Centuries of Verse: English and American. Ed. A.J.M. Smith. 2nd ed. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1947. 1957.

The Eighteen - Nineties: A Period Anthology in Prose and Verse. Ed. Martin Secker. London: The Richards Press, 1948.

**1950's**

British Literature: From Blake to the Present Day. Eds. Hazelton Spencer, Walter E. Houghton and Herbert Barrows. 2nd ed. Boston: D.C. Heath and Company, 1952. 1963.

Bowyer, John Wilson and John Lee Brooks. The Victorian Age: Prose, Poetry and Drama. 2nd ed. New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1954.

Woods, George Benjamin and Jerome Hamilton Buckley. Poetry of the Victorian Period. Rev. ed. Chicago: Scott, Foresman and Company, 1955.

Prose of the Victorian Period. Ed. William E. Buckler. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1958.

Victorian Poetry and Poetics. Eds. Walter E. Houghton and Robert G. Strange. 2nd ed. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1959. 1968.

**1960's**

Seven Centuries of Poetry: From Chaucer to Dylan Thomas. Ed. A.N. Jeffries. London: Longmans, Green & Company, Ltd., 1960.

Orel, Harold. The World of Victorian Humor. New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1961.

The Norton Anthology of English Literature: Major Authors Edition. Eds. M.H. Abrams, et al. New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1962.

Emergence of Victorian Consciousness. Ed. George L. Levine. New York: The Free Press, 1967.

The Art of Victorian Prose. Eds. George Levine and William Madden. New York: Oxford University Press, 1968.

Lang, Cecil Y. The Pre-Raphaelites and Their Circle. 2nd ed. Rev. ed. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1968. 1975.

The Victorian Mind: An Anthology. Eds. Gerald Hauvar and Gerald Sorenson. New York: Putnam, 1969.

**1970's**

Newbolt, Henry. An English Anthology of Prose-Poetry: Showing the Main Stream of English Literature Through Six Centuries (14th Century - 19th Century). New York: Books for Libraries Press, 1921. 1971.

The New Oxford Book of English Verse: 1250 - 1950. Ed. Helen Gardner. New York: Oxford University Press, 1972.

Anthology of Romanticism. Ed. Ernest Bernbaum. 3rd ed. New York: The Ronald Press Company, 1973.

The Oxford Anthology of English Literature. Eds. Frank Kermode, et al. Vol 2: 1800 to the Present. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973.

Pre-Raphaelite Writing: An Anthology. Ed. Derek Stanford. London: J.M. Dent and Sons, Ltd., 1973.

The Norton Anthology of English Literature. Eds. M.H. Abrams, et al. 3rd ed. Vol 2. New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1974.

The Norton Anthology of English Literature: The Major Authors. Eds. M.H. Abrams, et al. 3rd ed. New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1975.

Buckley, Jerome Hamilton. Victorian Poets and Prose Writers. 2nd ed. Arlington Heights, Illinois: AHM Publishing Company, 1977.

Amis, Kingsley. The New Oxford Book of English Light Verse. New York: Oxford University Press, 1978.

**1980's**

Thwaite, Anthony. Victorian Voices. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980.

_____. Six Centuries of Verse. New York: Methuen, Inc., 1985.

Everyman's Book of Victorian Verse. Ed. J.R. Watson. London: J.M. Dent & Sons, Ltd., 1982.

The Norton Anthology of World Masterpieces. Eds. Maynard Mack, et al. 5th ed. Vol 2. New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1985.

The Portable Victorian Reader. Ed. Gordon S. Haight. New York: Penguin Books, 1985.

Bates, W. Jackson and David Perkins. British and American Poets: Chaucer to the Present. San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1986.

British Poetry and Prose, 1870 - 1905. Ed. Ian Fletcher. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987.

The New Oxford Book of Victorian Verse. Ed. Christopher Ricks. New York: Oxford University Press, 1987.

The Norton Anthology of English Literature: The Major Authors. Eds. M.H. Abrams, et al. 5th ed. New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1987.

## Section 3

## Annotated Bibliography

Bowyer, John Wilson and John Lee Brooks. The Victorian Age: Prose, Poetry,and Drama. New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1938.

_____. The Victorian Age: Prose, Poetry, and Drama. 2nd ed. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1954.

Both editions are exactly alike, right down to pagination, even though the 1954 edition is the "second" edition. The few differences between the two editions are 1. the death dates of Shaw and Yeats are now listed, and 2., they have re-worked the general introductions to Dickens, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, and others. The editors consider "typical Victorian authors" to be Tennyson, Carlyle, and Browning.[1] They see political writer Jeremy Bentham as: "More effective than any of these radicals, . . . a colorless, pedestrian writer. . . whose influence by no means ceased with his death in 1832 or with the passage of the Reform Bill in the same year." [2]

They describe the writers as very political: "Yet from the time of Sartor Resartus forward the prose writers -essayists and novelists - were social critics, most of them trying in their writings to arouse the social conscience to self-assertion."[3] This "social criticism" is very prevalent, especially in poetry:

> Among the writers, it is revealing of the spirit of the times to compare such last Victorian poets as Meredith, Housman and Hardy with Tennyson and Browning. All three of the late writers are essentially pagan; all assume the correctness of science. Of the three, only Meredith is really an optimist, yet all possess a love for beauty, especially of the English countryside, and a worshipful respect for nature.[4]

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[1] John Wilson Bowyer and John Lee Brooks, The Victorian Age: Prose, Poetry and Drama, (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1954), p. 23.

[2] Ibid., p. 4.

[3] Ibid., p. 8.

[4] Ibid., p. 13.

Respecting nature, they feel that "Perhaps the most important reflection of nature is to be found not in the poetry at all but in the novels of George Eliot, Meredith and Hardy."[5]

The easiest way to tell whom the editors consider laudable is by biographical length. Arnold and Ruskin each have four pages, whereas everyone else has fewer.

Tennyson, Browning, Arnold, Rossetti, and Swinburne are emphasized. Female writers such as Bronte, Meynell, Christina Rossetti, Elizabeth Barrett Browning and George Eliot are also discussed.

The introductions give an overview of the Victorian age in all areas, leading up to and including literature, providing a background for the works to follow.

Bowyer and Brooks feel that "Dickens, Thackeray, George Eliot, Meredith and Hardy are 'major figures' in English fiction."[6] Carlyle is seen as "the greatest of the Victorian prophets,"[7] and he "contributed perhaps more than any other writer to the formation of the literary taste of his period."[8]

To Bowyer and Brooks, Dickens is one of the greatest novelist of this era: "The great Victorian novelists were all realists, and with the possible exception of Thackeray and Hardy, they were all moralists. Dickens was the most popular of them in their day, and at least in the range of characterization, he was the greatest genius."[9] They applaud the novelists, but only those from the early part of the era; the farther into the book one reads, the briefer the introductions become.

Bowyer and Brooks discuss the periodicals and newspapers of the day and their contributions to the era. An example is Punch, which told readers of the authorial rivalries, such as Dickens and Thackeray.

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[5]Ibid., p. 21.

[6]Ibid., p. 23.

[7]Ibid., p. 148.

[8]Ibid., p. 152.

[9]Ibid., p. 331.

Bowyer and Brooks discuss Dante Gabriel Rossetti and his works in relation to the era: "[He] did lead a revolt against conventionality of thought and diction such as some believed Tennyson had fallen into, and the reaction had some effect upon Tennyson himself; but he created no poetic school."[10] Rossetti is now considered the founder of the Pre-Raphaelite movement, which influenced the aestheticism of the nineties, as well as modern criticism.

Swinburne is based on substance instead of style:

> His anapests were pleasant and tuneful; but, except for a few of the shorter poems, familiarity with his forms has made them seem too elaborate, even soporific, and the assonances, alliterations,and rhymes strike the modern reader as inadequate devices for covering up indefiniteness of outline, verbal repetition, and turgidity.[11]

Bowyer and Brooks acknowledge that the Victorian era was not strictly literature - the theater made significant strides during this time, citing Robertson and Gilbert. Robertson is praised: "it is with his name that the story of Victorian drama begins."[12] They also see him as the transitional figure between the old and new dramas of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, but do not explain this point. Gilbert is the greatest comic playwright of the Victorian era: ". . . the greatest Victorian creations of nonsense are the librettos which Gilbert wrote for his comic-opera collaborations with Sullivan."[13]

This anthology is that includes Wilde and his works, the only early anthology until Oxford and Norton later in the 1970's to do so. Wilde and his material were considered inappropriate material for over sixty years because of the controversy he provoked.

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[10]Ibid., p. 585.

[11]Ibid., p. 663.

[12]Ibid., p. 438.

[13]Ibid., p. 681.

Hale, Sarah Josepha. A Complete Dictionary of Poetical Quotations: Comprising the Most Excellent and Appropriate Passages in the Old British Poets; and with Choice and Copious Selections from the Best Modern British and American Poets. Philadelphia: Claxton, Remsen, and Haffelfinger, 1876.

This is one of the first anthologies in the series. It is merely snippets of works - there are no notes or introductions. More of a sampling than anything else.

The Norton Anthology of English Literature: Major Authors Edition. Eds. M.H. Abrams, et al. New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1962.

One of the first anthologies Norton published for use at the college level. The Victorian segment is divided into two sections. The first is "Victorian," edited by George H. Ford, and includes Carlyle, Browning, Mill, Tennyson and Arnold. The second section is "Since 1890," edited by David Daiches, and includes Hopkins, Shaw and Yeats.

In the introduction to the era, Ford and Daiches comment on the study of Victorian literature, saying that "sympathy may not be essential, but condescension is fatal to understanding."[14] This philosophy is seen throughout the anthology, beginning with categorization of the era: "It may be legitimate to categorize as "Victorian" both the writings of Thomas Carlyle at the beginning of the period and of Oscar Wilde at the end, but we should do so with our eyes open to the gap that stretches between the worlds of these two writers."[15] But, they feel that "Wilde's decades, the '80's and '90's, when being earnest was apparently not important, can be legitimately overlooked if we are trying to categorize the Victorian age as a whole instead of distinguishing the stages of its development."[16] "Earnestness" is "partly a response to a challenging

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[14]Norton Anthology of English Literature: Major Authors, eds. M.H. Abrams, et al, (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1962), p.1365.

[15]Ibid.

[16]Ibid., p. 1371-72.

situation and partly as rooted in an active religious movement that left its stamp on agnostics as well as on believers."[17]

Victorian writers are seen as having a "mission", with John Ruskin "the most extreme example" [18], and Tennyson "more representative."[19]

The editors then discuss specific authors, with Matthew Arnold and his lasting reputation being praised: "Of all the major Victorian writers . . . it is Arnold who, "because of the peculiar quality of his intelligence and the peculiar nature of his relation to his time, will repay special study in a way no others will."[20] They feel that Arnold was "essentially a great teacher raised to the nth degree."[21]

Carlyle is linked with the younger men such as Dickens, Browning, and Ruskin, the "early generation of Victorian writers."[22]

Tennyson is the "spokesman of the Victorian age."[23] A sample is of this "spokesmanship" is his Dedication of Idylls of the King, "a representative example of a Victorian period piece."[24]

The next Victorian discussed is Robert Browning, whose popularity continues: "[His] capacity to attract the admiration of such a diversity of readers, sophisticated and unsophisticated, is one of several ways Browning's writings can be likened to those of Dickens and Shakespeare."[25]

Ford believes Browning's works are somewhat separate from the era, that "[the] poems [are]

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[17] Ibid., pp. 1373-74.

[18] Ibid., p. 1375.

[19] Ibid.

[20] Ibid., p. 1601.

[21] Ibid., p. 1606.

[22] Ibid., p. 1377.

[23] Ibid., p. 1439.

[24] Ibid., p. 1443.

[25] Ibid., p. 1521.

more difficult to relate to the age in which they were written than are the sometimes topical poems of Tennyson."[26] His style also isolates him from his contemporaries: "[He] draws from a different tradition, more colloquial and discordant, a tradition which includes the poetry of John Donne, the soliloquies of Shakespeare, the comic verse of the early nineteenth century poet Thomas Hood, and certain features of the narrative style of Chaucer."[27] Furthermore, Browning links earlier and later Victorian writers:

> The link between Browning and the Victorian prose writers is not limited to style. With later generations of Victorian novelists, George Eliot, George Meredith, and Henry James, Browning shares a central preoccupation . . . he was interested in exposing the devious ways in which our minds work and the complexity of our motives.[28]

With Mills, the attitude is slightly different from other editors: "It is evident that Mill is the least literary of the important Victorian prose writers. . . yet a knowledge of Mill's writings is essential to our understanding of Victorian literature."[29]

Literature "Since 1890" affected the era:

> Another manifestation - or at least accompaniment - of the end of the Victorian age was the rise of various kinds of pessimism and stoicism. The novels and poetry of Thomas Hardy show one kind of pessimism (and it **was** pessimism, even if Hardy himself repudiated the term), and the poems of A.E. Housman show another variety, while real of affected stoicism is to be found not only in these writers but also in many of the minor writers of the last decade of the nineteenth century and the first

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[26]Ibid., p. 1523.

[27]Ibid., p. 1525.

[28]Ibid.

[29]Ibid., pp. 1713-14.

decade of the twentieth century.[30]

Daiches also sees another side to Victorianism at this time: "It should also be remembered that anti-Victorianism - the criticism of the normal attitudes and preconceptions of the Victorian middle class - first became really violent during the last two decades of the nineteenth century."[31]

Daiches focuses upon the drama during this period, specifically Shaw, with an occasional mention of Wilde. Shaw, to Daiches, "In his general attitudes . . . represents the anti-Victorianism of the late Victorians; his long life should not obscure that fact that his first - and some of his best - plays belong to the nineties."[32] Shaw is also characterized by his "verbal and intellectual brilliance and his superb capacity to entertain."[33] Regarding Wilde, "Modern drama begins in a sense with the witty drawing-room comedies of Oscar Wilde; yet Wilde founded no dramatic school."[34] In concluding the section on drama, the differences between Wilde and Shaw are cited:

> The wit of Oscar Wilde's comedies had no specific critical implications; it drew on the conventions of society not in order to expose them but in order to get the maximum number of epigrams out of their delightful inconsistencies and absurdities. Shaw's wit was put at the service of genuine passion for reform, and even if he sometimes assumed the posture of a licensed clown. . . he remained to the end a crusader as well as an entertainer.[35]

Yeats "already regarded as a classic."[36]

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[30] Ibid., p. 1739.

[31] Ibid.

[32] Ibid., p. 1744.

[33] Ibid., p. 1745.

[34] Ibid., p. 1744.

[35] Ibid., p. 1759.

[36] Ibid., p. 1746.

The Norton Anthology of English Literature. Eds. M.H. Abrams, et al. 3rd edition. Volume 2. New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1974. 875-1827.

The editor for the Victorian Age in this book is George H. Ford. The Victorian Age is divided into six sections in this anthology, distinguishing it from either the preceding and upcoming editions. Those divisions are:

1. The Victorian Age itself
2. Lyric and Narrative Poetry
3. Nonsense Verse
4. Critical and Controversial Prose
5. Topics in Victorian Literature
6. The Nineties

Wilde, Hardy, Hopkins, Shaw and Yeats are grouped under the section "The Twentieth Century: 1890-Present", edited by David Daiches.

Overall, the introduction to the era is the same as earlier Norton editions. The change is in authors, layout, etc.

The "Victorian Age" is the first section with Carlyle, Mill, Tennyson, Browning, Dickens, Eliot, and Arnold discussed. The changes within the era are illustrated by the works of Dickens and Wilde:

> The most dramatic illustration of the shift is provided by the life and works of Pater's disciple, Oscar Wilde. In Dickens' David Copperfield, the hero affirms: "I have always been thoroughly in earnest." Forty-four years later, Wilde's comedy, The Importance of Being Earnest (1895) turns this typical mid-Victorian word "earnest," into a pun, a key joke in this comic spectacle of earlier Victorian values being turned upside down.[37]

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[37]Norton Anthology of English Literature, eds. M.H. Abrams, et al 3rd edition, Volume 2, (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1974), p. 884.

Theater, with its successes and failures, is discussed:

> The theater, throughout the period, was itself a flourishing and popular institution, but despite well-intentioned efforts, the Victorians were generally unsuccessful in creating for it plays of lasting interest (except for the remarkable comic operas of Gilbert and Sullivan) . . . Only as the century drew to its close did significant writing for the stage re-emerge after long absence, in the lively dramas of Oscar Wilde and George Bernard Shaw.[38]

The novel is prominent at this time, especially the "stylistic affinities between Browning and Dickens."[39] Thackeray's Vanity Fair is regarded as a "masterpiece."[40] Ford believes that Victorian writing suffers from lack of recognition: "Contributing to this undervaluation of the Victorian achievement was the assumption that novels published in serial form (as Victorian novels had usually been published) must be slapdash productions altogether deficient in art . . ."[41]

Ford discusses specific authors, beginning with Carlyle's reputation:

> But for most readers he survives rather as a man of letters, the inventor of a distinctive and extremely effective prose medium which can bring to life for us the very texture of events in scenes such as when a king confronts a guillotine, a young agnostic confronts the devil, or a talker such as Coleridge stupefies an audience of admiring disciples.[42]

Mill's On Liberty is a "classic treatise"[43] to Ford: "[He] is one of the leading figures in the intellectual history of his century, a thinker whose honest grappling with the political and religious

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[38]Ibid., p. 891.

[39]Ibid., p. 892.

[40]Ibid.

[41]Ibid., p. 893.

[42]Ibid., p. 900.

[43]Ibid., p. 966.

problems of his age was to have a profound influence on writers as diverse as Arnold, Swinburne, and Hardy."[44]

Tennyson follows, echoing the sentiments of his [Tennyson's] contemporaries and other anthologies: "Whether or not Alfred Tennyson was the greatest of the Victorian poets, as affirmed by many critics today, there is no doubt that in his own lifetime he was the most popular of poets."[45] He was as popular as Dickens because, "Alfred Tennyson [was] the only other Victorian writer to approach Dickens' eminence and his significance for his age."[46]

A noteworthy feature of this anthology is that the works of Charles Dickens are discussed and sampled. These include chapters from Martin Chuzzelwit, David Copperfield, Bleak House, Hard Times, and Our Mutual Friend. Dickens embraces age: "[He] has often been characterized as the great recorder of the Victorian age or a one of its major critics, but he was also, in his energetic pursuit of his goals, the embodiment of his age, the archetypal Victorian."[47]

There is not much said for either Eliot or Arnold that the other anthologies do not discuss.

"Lyric and Narrative Poetry" is examined. The general introduction explains the classifying of writers in this section: "Although such attempts to reclassify writers into major or minor categories can develop into a trifling game, they help to indicate the vitality of the ten poets represented. . ."[48] These poets are Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Emily Bronte, Dante and Christina Rossetti, Meredith, Morris, Fitzgerald, Clough, Swinburne, and Thomson. Ford includes them because:

> To read this group of writers enhances our realization of the total achievement of the Victorian age in poetry. And this realization would be further enhanced if to this group were added the names of some of the late Victorian poets whose writings are

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[44] Ibid., p. 965.

[45] Ibid., p. 1007.

[46] Ibid., p. 1214.

[47] Ibid., p. 1212.

[48] Ibid., p. 1463.

included in the twentieth-century section . . . Gerard Manly Hopkins, A.E. Housman, and Thomas Hardy.[49]

Their "minority" status links them with their contemporaries: "One topic that is unexpectedly prominent (unexpected because of the reputed strain of puritanism in the age) is love . . . The prominent role of love in lyrics and narratives of these ten writers also provides a link with a major Victorian love poet, Robert Browning . . ."[50] Moreover, "another recurring subject with which most of these ten poets were preoccupied is religious faith and doubt. Here the link with the major figures is with Tennyson and Arnold."[51]

Dante Gabriel Rossetti is the poet that Ford thoroughly discusses, evidenced by the fact all the biographical sketches are very brief, except for Rossetti's. He is the forerunner of aestheticism: "His view of life and art, . . . anticipated by many years the aesthetic movement later to be represented by such men as Walter Pater, Oscar Wilde, and the painter James McNeill Whistler . . ."[52]

Arthur Hugh Clough is the next writer considered, and Ford compares him to the early Arnold: "The writings of Clough . . . [can] add to our understanding of Arnold's early poems written during the phase of religious stress shared by both young men."[53] He is also seen as ironic: "In his later poems . . . the strains of earnestness, uncertainty, and humor are blended into an ironic point of view . . . different from the characteristic tone of his contemporaries."[54]

Swinburne's writings are of interest "in their own right and also as evidence of the

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[49]Ibid.

[50]Ibid.

[51]Ibid., pp. 1463-1464.

[52]Ibid., p. 1469.

[53]Ibid., p. 1520.

[54]Ibid., p. 1521.

breakdown of conventional Victorian standards during the latter part of the nineteenth century."[55]

Francis Thomson is linked to Browning because "his poetry is . . . a bridge to much of the poetry of the twentieth century."[56]

"Nonsense Verse" is discussed, specifically Edward Lear and Lewis Carroll: "Nonsense-writing . . . [was] a Victorian specialty."[57]

"Critical and Controversial Prose" is discussed, including Newman, Ruskin, Huxley, and Pater. This important because: "a comparative study [of critical and controversial prose] reduces our sense of chaotic diversity by making us aware that the Victorian prose writers were linked by a common concern for the fate of man in an industrialized, democratic, and increasingly secularized society."[58] To Ford, "Newman's writings may be appropriately classified under the heading of 'controversial prose' . . . [because] Apologia is seen as 'controversial.'"[59]

Ruskin is seen as both the "leading Victorian critic of art and an important critic of society."[60] Ford divides Ruskin's literary works into thee stages: 1. Art; 2. Architecture; 3. Economics.[61]

Huxley is appreciated because: "In Victorian controversies over religion and education, [he] wrote clear, readable, and very persuasive English prose."[62]

Pater is noted for his essays and their relationship to the era. First, Studies in the History of the Renaissance, "established [him] as the most important critical writer of the late Victorian

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[55]Ibid., p. 1526.

[56]Ibid., p. 1544.

[57]Ibid., p. 1549.

[58]Ibid., p. 1562.

[59]Ibid., pp. 1563-64.

[60]Ibid., p. 1584.

[61]Ibid., pp. 1584-85.

[62]Ibid., p. 1613.

period."[63] Secondly, he "is a key figure in the transition from mid-Victorianism to the decadence of the 1890's, [and] Pater's essays also command our attention as examples of impressionistic criticism at its best."[64] Lastly, Ford considers: "Of particular value to students of English literature are his discriminating studies of Wordsworth, Coleridge, Lamb, and Sir Thomas Browne in his volume of Appreciation (1889)."[65]

There is nothing noteworthy in the "Topics" section. "The Nineties" is next, where Daiches is interested in aestheticism, Wilde, and Shaw.

Daiches opens his discussion by connecting Romantics and aesthetes: "The poets of the aesthetic movement were in a sense the last heirs of the Romantics; the appeal to sensation in their imagery goes back through Rossetti and Tennyson to Keats."[66] Moreover, Daiches says that "at their best they have considerable emotional power and a certain incantatory persuasiveness. At their worst, the sensationalism of their imagery becomes merely ludicrous."[67]

As with other Norton editions, the nineties are a decade that cannot be ignored: "What makes the nineties important as a period of English literary history . . . is their strongly held belief in the independence of art, their view that a work of art had its own unique kind of value - that, in T.S. Eliot's phrase, poetry must be judged "as poetry and not another thing."[68]

Oscar Wilde's contributions to the era are the primary discussion, and were diverse: "His most important work was in his critical and dramatic prose and his curiously mannered prose fable, The Picture of Dorian Gray (1891)."[69] Likewise, "Wilde's greatest successes were his plays - Lady

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[63] Ibid., p. 1632.

[64] Ibid., p. 1633.

[65] Ibid.

[66] Ibid., p. 1693.

[67] Ibid., pp. 1693-94.

[68] Ibid., p. 1694.

[69] Ibid., p. 1695.

Windemere's Fan (1892), A Woman of No Importance (1893), An Ideal Husband (1895), and, best and most brilliant, The Importance of Being Earnest (1894)."[70]

Daiches critiques Shaw: "Man and Superman (1904) is an ambitious attempt to project through comedy his views of how the Life Force works in ordinary life and contains some brilliant scenes, though the play as a whole is rather too long and too talkative . . ." [71] Next is a review of Back to Methuselah (1921), which was, "Shaw's most ambitious work, and the one which he considered his masterpiece. But it is in fact the dullest of his plays."[72] Last is Saint Joan (1923), "his one tragedy and often regarded as his finest play, is brilliant in its way, but it is really a comedy containing one tragic scene rather than a tragedy."[73]

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[70]Ibid., p. 1696.

[71]Ibid., p. 1749.

[72]Ibid., p. 1750.

[73]Ibid.

The Norton Anthology of English Literature: The Major Authors. Eds. M.H.Abrams, et al. 3rd ed. New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1975. 1907 - 2266.

As with previous editions, the editors are George H. Ford and David Daiches. The section on Victorian literature features Carlyle, Arnold, Tennyson, Browning, Hardy, Hopkins and Yeats. The introduction to the era does not present blatantly biased views of the era or authors, as some of the other anthologies do.

Ford and Daiches recognize that "in much of the literature of this final phase of Victorianism we can sense an over-all change of attitudes."[74] And, they go on to illustrate this change.

The era's diversity is recognized: "Victorianism is an age which relished the comic genius of Dickens and Thackeray, the grotesque humor of Browning and Carlyle, the nonsensical whimsy of Edward Lear and Lewis Caroll . . ." [75] This diversity mirrors political and social change: ". . . its variety both in style and subject matter. Variety is in part a symptom of the Victorian writer's bold independence and his zest for literary experiment for its own sake, but it is also a symptom of an absence of any final agreement concerning the function of literature and art in a democratic society."[76]

Ford and Daiches have definite views on the writers/works chosen, though they are much more subtle about it than Bowyer and Brooks. A sample of this is the Brownings: Elizabeth is now a "minor figure" in literature, but included in a later edition. Robert's poems are "more difficult to relate to the age in which they were written than are the sometimes topical poems of Tennyson."[77] Also, Browning's style "separates it from Victorian", but why is not explained.

The anthology explains how Romanticism influenced the Victorian writers: "The most

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[74]The Norton Anthology of English Literature: The Major Authors, eds. M.H. Abrams, et al, 3rd ed., (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1975), p. 1916.

[75]Ibid.

[76]Ibid., p. 1922.

[77]Ibid., p. 2079.

representative Victorian poets such as Tennyson or Rossetti write in the manner of Keats, Milton, Spenser, and classical poets such as Virgil. Theirs is the central stylistic tradition in English poetry, one which favors smoothly polished texture and pleasing liquidity of sound."[78]

[78] Ibid., p. 2081.

The Norton Anthology of English Literature: The Major Authors. Eds. M.H. Abrams, et al. 5th ed. New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1987. 1889-2220.

The editors are listed as being George H. Ford, David Daiches and Carol T. Christ, but do not list what sections they edited.

This anthology considers Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Tennyson, Robert Browning, Arnold and Hopkins to be "Victorian" authors; Hardy, Yeats and D.H. Lawrence are "twentieth century" writers.

The era is broken into several sections:

1. The Early Period (1832-48): A Time of Trouble
2. The Mid-Victorian Period (1848-70): Economic Prosperity and Religious Controversy
3. The Late Period (1870-1901): Decay of Victorian Values
4. The Nineties

Topics discussed include:

1. Religion
2. Role of Women in Victorian Life and Literature
3. Diversity of Victorian Literature
4. Victorian Prose
5. Victorian Drama and Theater
6. Victorian Novel

The editors see the era for what it really was, not how it has been perceived:

> The whole meaning of Victorian England is lost if it is thought of as a country of stuffy complacency and black top-hatted moral priggery. Its frowsty crinolines and dingy hansom cabs, its gas-lit houses and over-ornate draperies, concealed a people engaged in a tremendously exciting adventure - the daring experiment of fitting industrial man into a democratic society. Their failures, faults, and ludicrous

> shortcomings are all too apparent: but the days when Mr. Lytton Strachey could afford to laugh at the foibles of the "Eminent Victorians" have passed, and we must ask ourselves the question of whether we can laugh at our great-grandfathers' attempts to solve problems to which we have so far failed to find an answer. At least the Victorians found greatness, stability, and peace: and the whole world, marvelling, envied them for it.[79]

This "greatness and stability" is reflected in the literature.

The editors find that "creative energy . . . [is] a distinguishing quality of Victorian life and literature. . .,"[80], most obviously at the end of the era. Additionally, the authors "consider the final decade, the nineties, as a bridge between two centuries":[81]

> Much of the writing of the decade illustrates a breakdown of a different sort. Artists of the nineties, representing the aesthetic movement, were very much aware of living at the end of a great century, and often cultivated a fin - de - siecle prose . . . The Yellow Book, a periodical which ran from 1894 to 1897, is generally thought to represent the aestheticism of the nineties.[82]

With the nineties being a "bridge between two centuries", the editors feel: "The final decade can be viewed, that is, as either the beginning of a great future movement in literature or as the ending and death of another great movement in literature. Possibly it may be more fruitful to see this transitional decade as both a beginning and an ending . . ."[83]

This anthology explores the connections between the Romantic and Victorian writers. They

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[79]Norton Anthology of English Literature: Major Authors, eds. M. H. Abrams, et al., 5th ed., (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1987), p. 1890.

[80]Ibid., p. 1891.

[81]Ibid., p. 1892.

[82]Ibid., p. 1899.

[83]Ibid.

also admit difficulty in pinning down characteristics of Victorian literature: ". . . most candid literary historians admit that while we may confidently identify the distinguishing characteristics of individual Victorian writers, of a Browning, a Dickens, or a Newman, it is extremely difficult to devise satisfactory statements about Victorian literature that are generally applicable to most or all of these writers."[84]

Drama is discussed, both its strengths and shortcomings: "If the Victorian age can lay claim to greatness for its poetry, its prose, and its novels, it would be difficult to make such a claim for its plays, at least until the final decade of the century. Here we must distinguish between playwriting on the one hand and theatrical activity on the other."[85] Drama did have its high points: "In any event, in the 1890s' appeared the lively dramatic masterpieces of Oscar Wilde and George Bernard Shaw; no apologies are thereafter required."[86]

It is noteworthy that Oscar Wilde and his contributions to drama and the age is discussed, something that very few of the anthologies attempt.

Novelists play a major role in the period:

> It will be obvious that any estimate of Victorian literature has to take into account the outstanding achievements of the Victorian novelists. From the time of Charles Dickens . . . early in the period . . . to the final decade when the late novels of Thomas Hardy, such as his Tess of the D'Urbervilles (1891) appeared, a long line of novelists continued to turn out monumental masterpieces that delighted their contemporaries and that continue to delight today, as is evident by their being among the most readily available books in English.[87]

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[84]Ibid., p. 1906.

[85]Ibid., pp. 1907-08.

[86]Ibid., p. 1908.

[87]Ibid.

Elizabeth Barrett Browning is the primary female writer discussed: "During her lifetime, [she] was England's most famous woman poet,"[88] though she "seems to us now a lesser figure . . ."[89]

Several of Tennyson's works are considered "newspaper pieces", with the best being The Charge of the Light Brigade.[90]

Robert Browning is distinguished in this anthology; he is the "rival or equal of Tennyson."[91] Some of his "greatest" works are cited, including Dramatist Personae (1864), a lesser-known monologue called "Caliban Upon Setebos", and "his greatest single poem," "The Ring and the Book."[92]

As with other anthologies, Arnold's career is separated: "Arnold's career as a writer can be divided into four periods. In the 1850's appeared most of his poems; in the 1860's, his literary criticism and social criticism; in the 1870's, his religious and educational writings; and in the 1880's, his second set of essays in literary criticism."[93] Regarding poetry, "he is at his best as a poet of nature." [94]

The last person discussed is Thomas Hardy and only his poems, because as they say, "no extract could do justice to Hardy's power as a novelist . . ."[95]

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[88]Ibid., p. 1911.

[89]Ibid., p. 2035.

[90]Ibid., p. 1938.

[91]Ibid., p. 2035.

[92]Ibid., p. 2038.

[93]Ibid., p. 2111.

[94]Ibid., p. 2112.

[95]Ibid., p. 2206.

Oxford Anthology of English Literature. Ed. Frank Kermode, et al. Vol 2: 1800 to the Present. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973. 787-1510.

The editors: Lionel Trilling and Harold Bloom - Victorian Prose and Poetry; Frank Kermode and John Hollander - Modern.

This anthology divides the Victorian era into six sections:

1. Victorian Prose
2. Victorian Poetry
3. Pre-Raphaelite poets
4. Other Victorian Poets
5. Poetry of the 90's
6. Modern British Literature (includes Hardy, Yeats and Shaw)

The editors are frank and offer their personal views. Many individual works have separate introductions.

A summary of how Victorianism moved beyond Romanticism:

> The difference between the self-consciousness of the Romantic period and that of the Victorian period is chiefly quantitative - in the later period there were more people whose sense of life was decisively conditioned by their perception that the age was an entity about which quite precise predictions could be made.[96]

The relationship between reader and author, and how this affected the writings is discussed: "But for the Victorian novelist the reader was a personal presence, as the novelist was a personal presence for the reader. This trust in the reciprocal relationship of reader and writer is characteristic of all the great prose of the Victorian period."[97]

Literature, religion, and art were entwined:

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[96] Oxford Anthology of English Literature, ed. Frank Kermode, et al., Volume 2: 1800 to the Present, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973), p. 790.

[97] Ibid., p. 791.

> In the intellectual generations after Arnold's there was less emphasis upon those qualities of art which might make it seem cognate with religion, but for Walter Pater and Oscar Wilde the experience of art and what followed from it in the way of heightened perception and emotion were in effect the justification of human experience.[98]

The first section discussed is "Victorian Prose", specifically Carlyle, Mill, Newman, Ruskin, Arnold, Huxley, Morris, Pater, Butler, and Wilde.

Carlyle's career, to Trilling and Bloom, "at least up to its climax of achievement, may be thought of as a paradigm of English intellectual culture in the Victorian Age." [99] They also believe that his work The French Revolution "establish[ed] him as one of the leading literary personages of his time and place."[100] Sartor Resartus is another emphasized work. In its introduction, they believe it is: "an outrageous book and if one is to get on with it, one must consent to be outraged. It is a work in the mode of the grotesque; it is willful, eccentric, intentionally putting stumbling blocks in the way of the reader's understanding."[101] Sartor Resartus is the work by which Carlyle is now remembered. As for Past and Present, Trilling and Bloom say that "perhaps no book of the Victorian Age had so direct, immediate, and proliferating an influence."[102]

Newman's What is Poetry? has its own introduction, as does his "most widely read book," Apologia Pro Vita Sua. The "most brilliant of his works" is An Essay in Aide of a Grammar of Assent.[103]

With Ruskin, ". . . one may well recognize . . . the pre-eminent intellectual genius of Victorian

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[98] Ibid., p. 799.

[99] Ibid.

[100] Ibid., p. 801.

[101] Ibid., pp. 802-03.

[102] Ibid., p. 838.

[103] Ibid., p. 898.

England."[104] The "beautiful Praeterita, composed between 1885 and 1889, [is] the last work of his genius."[105]

Matthew Arnold has two sections in this anthology - prose works, and later in the poetry section. Trilling and Bloom believe:

> Matthew Arnold's life in literature falls into two parts, the division being marked by the Preface to the Poems of 1853. It cannot be said that this striking essay signalizes the end of Arnold's career as a poet; some of the poems he was still to write are among his most memorable. But after 1853 it is as a critic rather than a poet that Arnold stands before the world.[106]

They write of his poetry: "He was never accounted a great poet, yet his poems had in his own day, and for a considerable time thereafter, an appeal which was disproportionate to their aesthetic success."[107] Furthermore: ". . . the claims that can be made for Arnold's poetry probably cannot be large, and sometimes - not always - it seems fair to say that Arnold is not essentially a poet at all, not naturally a poet, as, say, Keats and Shelley and Tennyson are naturally poets even when they are at their least impressive."[108]

As a critic, "the chief preoccupation of his criticism . . . was the definition of the quality of mind best able to take action to cope with the difficulties of modern life."[109] His best-known work, Essays in Criticism, is analyzed: "Their subjects are not related to each other in any obvious sense, and at least some of them must seem of only marginal importance. And the tone of the essays, though certainly serious, is not momentous, as compared with the tone of Carlyle's or Ruskin's, it is

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[104]Ibid., p. 941.

[105]Ibid., p. 943.

[106]Ibid., p. 986.

[107]Ibid.

[108]Ibid.

[109]Ibid., p. 987.

curiously modest."[110] The Study of Poetry, has its own introduction, and "exists in the aura of the controversy it provokes."[111] Additionally, ". . . it can be said that, Dr. Johnson on Lycidas excepted, no work of criticism so well instructs us by the disagreement it arouses."[112]

Trilling and Bloom recognizes that Arnold's reputation continues today: "Arnold's poetry still makes its appeal. His criticism is still central in the tradition, its position there attested to if only by the frequency with which its particular judgements are disputed a century after they were made."[113]

Oscar Wilde is discussed, a unique inclusion because of the controversy that has plagued his life and career:

> Inevitably such a career puts difficulties in the way of judging the work of the man who pursued it. But these have diminished with the passing of the years - less and less do the extravagances of Wilde's self-dramatization and the pathos of what may fairly be called his martyrdom obscure his quite momentous significance as a writer.[114]

They acknowledge his "first notable achievement as a writer" was his novel The Picture of Dorian Gray (1890),[115] saying that "For all its faults of tone and style, [it] is a significant and memorable work and perhaps in nothing so much as its Preface, which consists of a series of epigrams intended to shock by their insolence."[116] Wilde is seen as Romantic: "If we can accept that Wilde in some part of his thought is in the line of Blake, we can the better understand the impulse that led this worshipper of artifice and elegance to follow The Picture of Dorian Gray with

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[110] Ibid., p. 988.

[111] Ibid., p. 1019.

[112] Ibid.

[113] Ibid., p. 990.

[114] Ibid., P. 1126.

[115] Ibid., p. 1128.

[116] Ibid.

The Soul of Man Under Socialism."[117]

The most interesting comment about Wilde is made in regard to his play, The Importance of Being Earnest: "[it] gives us license to believe that moral judgement has not yet been invented, and probably never will be; there is no need for it."[118]

The second section is "Victorian Poetry," and here the Trilling and Bloom express their personal views unreservedly. Tennyson, Browning and Arnold show that "nineteenth-century English poetry is one of the world's major imaginative achievements, almost comparable to the poetry of the English Renaissance."[119] Furthermore, they believe that "the somewhat less titanic six major Victorian poets - Tennyson, Browning, Arnold, Rossetti, Swinburne, and Hopkins - present an extraordinary variety and intensity, not matched by twentieth-century poetry in English, not even by Hardy, Yeats, Stevens."[120]

They tie together the Romantic and Victorian poets: "The prophetic burden of Romantic poetry was assumed by the Victorian prose seers: Carlyle, Newman, Mill, Ruskin, the later Arnold, the later Morris, and Pater, a displacement which reduced both the ambitions and the risks of Victorian verse."[121] But the influence was not entirely good:

> . . . the major Victorian poets modified or abandoned their early Romanticism in order to trust (however faintly) in an even larger and more traditional hope, the Christian humanism that had helped to sustain the young Milton. Whether the hope had even a minimal basis in reality we may doubt, but who can argue against hope? Where Victorian poetry still moves us is where it exceeds us in hope.[122]

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[117]Ibid., p. 1129.

[118]Ibid., p. 1130.

[119]Ibid., p. 1177.

[120]Ibid.

[121]Ibid., p. 1178.

[122]Ibid., p. 1179.

Tennyson is given the greatest emphasis of all the poets, being "in some respects the most accomplished artist of all English poets since Pope. . ."[123] They underscore this by saying that:

> Tennyson understood what poetry was, argument that could not be separated from song, gesture, dance, and the rhythms of a unique but representative individual's breath-soul. Browning and Yeats and the High Romantics before Tennyson . . .all of them mastered a great style, but none of them wrote so well so consistently as he did.[124]

His "In Memoriam A.H.H." is a "central poem, and as much the characteristic poem of its time as Eliot's 'The Waste Land' was to the twenties and thirties of this century."[125] Trilling and Bloom recommend "In Memoriam A.H.H.": "This editor would urge attention to sections XCV and CII, as being not only the best poems in the sequence, but as establishing the deeper enterprise of Tennyson's imagination in the poem."[126]

Next is Robert Browning, who "in this editor's judgement, is the most considerable poet in English since the major Romantics, surpassing his great contemporary rival Tennyson, and the principal twentieth-century poets, including even Yeats, Hardy, and Wallace Stevens, . . ." [127] Continuing the tradition of other authors, several of Browning's individual works have a separate introduction, including "Childe Roland," "Andrea del Sarto," and two of his lesser-known works, "Abt Vogler" and "Caliban Upon Setebos," a "masterpiece of grotesque imagination."[128]

Matthew Arnold is discussed in this section, and again the editors are vocal: ". . . his work as a poet may not merit the reputation it has continued to hold in the twentieth-century. Arnold is,

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[123]Ibid., p. 1180.

[124]Ibid., p. 1182.

[125]Ibid., p. 1226.

[126]Ibid., p. 1227.

[127]Ibid., p. 1279.

[128]Ibid., p. 1354.

at his best, a very good but highly derivative poet, unlike Tennyson, Browning, Hopkins, Swinburne, and Rossetti, all of whom individualized their voices."[129] Continuing, "with very few exception, Arnold's poems are seriously flawed, . . .",[130] but that "Stanzas from the Grand Chartreuse", "by any standards is one of Arnold's finest."[131]

The Pre-Raphaelite Poets are considered, including Dante and Christina Rossetti, Meredith, Morris, Swinburne, Patmore, and Hopkins. The introductions are very brief, usually no more than one paragraph in length. Regarding Pre-Raphaelites: "As a literary term, "Pre-Raphaelite" is almost meaningless, yet it survives because we need some name for the cluster of poets who are the overt Romantics among the Victorians."[132] This "overt" Romanticism" is now considered as an important factor in the Victorian age.

Like the Victorian's Browning, Dante Rossetti is the favorite Pre-Raphaelite, "though out of favor in our time seems to this editor the best poet of the Victorian period, after Browning and Tennyson, surpassing Arnold and even Hopkins and Swinburne."[133] Rossetti is not without his faults, according to Trilling: "[he] is a difficult poet, not only because his art is deliberately committed to sustaining an intensity that precludes mere action, but because the intensity almost invariably is one of baffled passion."[134]

George Meredith, "though deeply affected by Rossetti, is by contrast a more refreshing, more simply naturalistic poet, though of lesser achievement."[135] Moreover:

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[129]Ibid., p. 1366.

[130]Ibid.

[131]Ibid., p. 1383.

[132]Ibid., p. 1401.

[133]Ibid., p. 1403.

[134]Ibid., p. 1402.

[135]Ibid., p. 1403.

> Meredith's poetry is rugged going, because of his Rossetti-like clusters of detail, but he is rhythmically persuasive, open and passionate compared with Rossetti. . . He lacks Rossetti's convincing originality, and can sound too much like Rossetti. . . but his stature as a poet deserves more from criticism than he has as yet received.[136]

Christina Rossetti "does not sustain comparison with Emily Dickinson, her American contemporary, but can be judged superior to any other woman who wrote poetry in England before the twentieth century."[137]

Morris is intriguing: "If his interests had been fewer, his poetry would have sprawled less, and meant more, but he valued his other enterprises at least as much as he cared for his poetry."[138]

Swinburne is praised more than Rossetti:

> . . . his genius was prodigal, from his best earlier poetry "Atalanta in Calydon" (1865) and "Poems and Ballads, First Series" (1866), through his critical studies of Blake (1868), Shakespeare (1880), Victor Hugo (1886) and Ben Johnson (1889), on to the superb late lyrics of "Poems and Ballads, Third Series" (1889) and "A Channel Passage" (1904).[139]

Trilling and Bloom write that "his best poems, like "Hertha" and the elegy to Baudelaire are intellectually more powerful than any Victorian poetry except Browning's."[140]

Gerard Manley Hopkins is listed in the table of contents as being amongst the Pre-Raphaelites, though he has a separate introduction from the rest of the group. Trilling and Bloom believe that "of all the Victorian poets, Hopkins has been the most misrepresented and overpraised

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[136] Ibid.

[137] Ibid.

[138] Ibid., p. 1404.

[139] Ibid., p. 1405.

[140] Ibid.

by modern critics."[141] Hopkins adheres to the cultural expectations, in that "his best poetry, with all its peculiarities of diction and metric, is less of a departure from Victorian norm than Browning's, or Swinburne's, or even Patmore's."[142] His place amongst Victorian writers is clear: "The original, almost incredible, accomplishment of Hopkins is to have made Keatsian poetry into a devotional mode. . ."[143]

The next section discussed is "Other Victorian Poets": "These half-dozen poets are united only in being Victorian, having no Pre-Raphaelite connections, and in being significant without achieving major status, at least from their poetry alone."[144] The group includes Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Edward Lear, Emily Bronte, Arthur Hugh Clough, Lewis Carroll, and James Thomson.

According to Trilling and Bloom, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, "had an enormous contemporary reputation, and now survives in her husband's work and in a handful of lyrics, of which 'A Musical Instrument' is best."[145] They continue: "Her long poem 'Aurora Leigh' (1856) was much admired, even by Ruskin, but is very bad. Quite bad too are the famous 'Sonnets from the Portuguese'. . . "[146]

Edward Lear is "the greatest master of nonsense verse in the language. . . His first A Book of Nonsense (1864) was his best, . . . "[147]

There is not much said for Emily Bronte or Lewis Carroll, but Clough is touted as "a fine satirical poet and moving skeptical consciousness still receives little recognition for his talents."[148]

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[141] Ibid., p. 1465.

[142] Ibid.

[143] Ibid., p. 1466.

[144] Ibid., p. 1475.

[145] Ibid.

[146] Ibid.

[147] Ibid.

[148] Ibid.

Likewise, Thomson "carries the poetic passion for affirmation of what might be called Christian unbelief rather farther than even Swinburne could manage."[149] Moreover, "'The City of Dreadful Night'. . . [is] his best but bleakest poem . . . maintains a fine negative exuberance, and is a superb period piece."[150]

"Poetry of the Nineties" consists of works by Gilbert, Wilde, Davidson, Dowson, and Lionel Johnson. The only comments worth noting here pertain to Wilde and Johnson. Wilde's "The Ballad of Reading Gaol", "given here in curtailed (and thus improved) form [is] his best poem, . . ."[151] according to the editors. Trilling and Bloom continue this vein by saying that "Wilde was a poor poet, though a superb critic and dazzling dramatist."[152] Lionel Johnson was "the epitome of his generation. . . [he wrote] the best poem of the nineties in his tragic 'The Dark Angel'."[153]

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[149]Ibid., p. 1476.

[150]Ibid.

[151]Ibid., p. 1494.

[152]Ibid.

[153]Ibid.

Roe, Frederick. Victorian Prose. New York: The Ronald Press Company, 1947.

Roe opens by discussing why he chose these particular authors:

> The twelve men whose work is represented in this volume are masters of non-fictional prose, the most eminent, all in all, in a time of great writers. In thought, style and influence taken together they reflect the vast range of Victorian thought and movement more effectively than any other group of prose masters could do . . . They tell us, in their various ways, something of the main currents of life and thought running through the period.[154]

Roe show the perception of the Victorian era has become more realistic:

> Nowadays, when people speak of the nineteenth century, it is not of a world dominated by Mrs. Grundy and the antimacassar . . . What we once upon a time called their stuffiness we now enviously describe as their security. What we once upon a time called their materialism we are now inclined to describe as their civilization.[155]

The "Foreword" introduces the age and its accomplishments. Also, Roe delves into the minds of his authors, trying to help the reader see exactly what Arnold, Pater, and others, were telling their audiences.

Carlyle was the writer whom Roe feels the public most admired: "From the field of letters the voice that carried farthest and meant most to reflective British readers of 1845-1865 was the voice of Carlyle . . . They saw in him a prophet who spoke out of the depths of a great experience and a great conviction, and who spoke powerfully."[156] He theorizes about Carlyle's popularity: "A few ideas, a highly individual temperament, and a profound sincerity underlie his voluminous

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[154]Frederick Roe, Victorian Prose, (New York: The Ronald Press Company, 1947), p. xi.

[155]Ibid.

[156]Ibid., p. 3.

work."[157]

Macauley and his Essays continue in popularity: "The Essays, with all their faults, will continue to be read, not only because they are models of effective assertion, but because they are extraordinarily vivid expressions of great characters and great events as well as of a point of view that is representative of an important period in British life."[158] He continues by saying that Macauley's greatest work is the History: "The History, . . . is yet the top of his performance, . . . here Macauley is not only a master of exposition, he is also a master of narration and portraiture. . . The great third chapter is a classic. Along with other parts of this masterwork it is a perfect realization of Macauley's literary ideals."[159]

John Henry Newman is "one of the master's of English prose,"[160] though "much of Newman's prose is too specialized in subject matter for most readers, if considered as a basis for general discussion."[161] Newman, says Roe, "had he chosen, he might have become a great historian, one to challenge comparison with Gibbon, Macauley, or Carlyle."[162]

Regarding John Stuart Mill, "he is not one of the Victorian masters of imaginative prose, like Carlyle, Ruskin or Newman, whose thought is inseparable from a passionate personality, and whose style, consequently, reflects the movement and color of a poetic mind."[163] Roe is very critical of Mill's writing style: "[he] has passion, at times profound passion, but it is so highly intellectualized that it is felt only by those readers most capable of sustained interest in ideas, which are often

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[157]Ibid., p. 4.

[158]Ibid., p. 86.

[159]Ibid., pp. 86-87.

[160]Ibid., p. 157.

[161]Ibid., p. 159.

[162]Ibid.

[163]Ibid., p. 215.

abstract and are expressed with scrupulous regard for the laws of logic."[164] Roe explains why he places Mill among the "masters": "Being, however, one of the clearest and wisest minds of his time, with something to say - "the grand requisite of good writing" - and possessing an extraordinary command of the ordinary resources of language, Mill holds a place with the Victorian masters of prose."[165]

John Ruskin begins the essayist section. Roe recounts an anecdote which not only describes Ruskin's works, but also how the Victorian writers viewed each other: "Ruskin's mastery of language was so distinguished as to prompt Tennyson (a severe judge) to remark that he considered Ruskin to be one of six authors in whom he found the stateliest English prose."[166] Like Tennyson, Roe enjoys Ruskin's prose, but is critical:

> But with all allowance for faults, his style remains, at its best, a great style. It moves . . . through at least three phases . . . The earlier style is the most famous. It is the work of a man with a soul of a poet and the eye of a painter . . . The middle style . . . is more difficult to describe because its art is better concealed. It has cast aside the earlier rigidities and formal devices . . . Its thought is more concentrated. The intensity is not less, but it is better controlled. The typical writing of the third manner . . . is a still different thing. It is often flat and uninspired, weakly garrulous and didactic or merely petulant and sometimes hysterical - the wearisome grumblings of a tired and disappointed old man.[167]

Roe echoes Norton and Oxford regarding Matthew Arnold: "In the early 1850's, Matthew Arnold enjoyed as a poet a limited reputation, which gradually increased until today many admirers

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[164] Ibid.

[165] Ibid., p. 218.

[166] Ibid., p. 317.

[167] Ibid. p. 319.

place him higher in poetry than in prose."[168]

To Roe, the greatest scientist of the Victorian era wasn't Darwin, but Huxley: "One of the greatest achievements of the Victorian era was the advancement of science. There were many distinguished workers, among whom Darwin was first. But in the company of his contemporaries or immediate successors none was more brilliant and famous than Thomas Henry Huxley . . ."[169] Huxley's contributions were also literary: "If along with this profound insight into many of the major human problems of Huxley's day, we think of his lifelong pleasure in pure literature and his command of language, whether for the platform or for the printed page, we may well consider him to be as much a man of letters as a scientist."[170] Huxley exemplifies the emphasis upon style over substance:

> His own essays, with hardly an exception, are models of what George Bernard Shaw calls style, namely, effectiveness of assertion. Their forward movement is a sure sign of the author's mastery of subject matter and form; they are invariably direct, unambiguous, satisfyingly complete. And besides, there are, as Darwin exclaimed, "scores of splendid passages, and vivid flashes of wit."[171]

Eventually, Roe arrives at the "aesthete" writer - Walter Pater - and his criticism is mixed. He sees Pater as a writer of "distinguished" prose, but also concedes that his works may be one-sided: "Doubtless his work will always have a limited appeal . . . His almost exclusive interest in the arts of painting, architecture, and imaginative literature is probably too special to attract a wide audience."[172] He dislikes aestheticism:

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[168] Ibid., p. 393.

[169] Ibid., p. 465.

[170] Ibid. p. 467.

[171] Ibid., p. 468.

[172] Ibid., p. 568.

> Such is the essence of Pater's aestheticism. While there are traces of over-sensuousness in its earlier expression, and while mere form and color seem at times to be more important than ideas . . . this aestheticism is for the most part a severely intellectual matter, chiefly the concern of what Pater, along with Coleridge and Arnold, regard as the highest faculty in man - imaginative reason. . . [173]

He links Coleridge and Arnold with aestheticism. Also, in spite of his criticism, he manages to find some praise: "the reader, at least the scholarly reader, receives from Pater the satisfaction that comes from contact with an extraordinarily informed and refined intelligence, an intelligence that knows the significance of beauty and delighted in it. . ." [174]

The last author Roe discusses is Stevenson, and while he is "one of the most human of writers,"[175] Roe admits he is not one of the best: "Stevenson cannot rank with the greatest masters of Victorian prose, but he holds a distinguished place not very far below them, a place which he seems certain to keep for years to come."[176] He may not be one of the best, but to Roe he is one of the most appealing: "His distinction, if not so high as theirs in any one field of writing, is more varied . . . And as a personality, whether revealed in his letters, in his verse, in his travel notes, or in the records of biographers and intimate friends, he is one of the most appealing figures of his time."[177]

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[173] Ibid.

[174] Ibid., p. 569.

[175] Ibid., p. 605.

[176] Ibid., p. 603.

[177] Ibid.

## Section 4

## "The Changing of the Guard": Observations on Trends, etc.

**The Changing of the Guard: Some Observations**

There has been a definite shift in attitudes regarding Victorian writers. One of the earliest anthologies, Sarah Josephina Hale's A Complete Dictionary of Poetical Quotations (1876), contained brief sketches of poems and quotations of Victorian writers. When Bowyer and Brooks wrote The Victorian Age: Prose, Poetry and Drama in 1938, they had a very broad sampling of authors and their works. They also had an overview of the age itself, as well as biographies on the authors. This was repeated verbatim in the 1954 edition.

Roe, in 1947, reveals a more compact, selective view of the age. He chose to highlight only twelve authors, as opposed to the sixty of Bowyer and Brooks. Roe is very clear as to why an author is included, based upon their merits as writers, and not just because they were part of the era, as sometimes seems the case with the more historical Bowyer and Brooks.

Norton in 1962 begins a new trend in anthologies, covering several literary periods in one volume (Romantic to Modern), and not just the "Who's Who" of Victorian literature, as with Roe. This did not continue into the nineteen-eighties, though, because now the anthologies highlight primarily Tennyson, Arnold, Browning, and Hardy, with brief introductions to other authors. A good indicator though, is that Rossetti and the Pre-Raphaelites have gained in status in recent years, and are now seen as having made important contributions to the Victorian age.

Bowyer and Brooks consider "typical" Victorian authors to be Tennyson, Carlyle and Browning.[178] Oxford, Norton and Roe do not identify "typical" authors, but do include these writers in their anthologies.

There is a deviation in the "major" and "minor" authors of the Victorian era. For Bowyer and Brooks ". . . the major writers [are] Carlyle, Dickens, Meredith and Hardy. Among the minor figures . . . [are] James Thomson, George Gissing, and Francis Thompson, who made reputations in

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[178]Bowyer and Brooks, 1938, p. 1.

literature after they had failed in other pursuits."[179] They seem to consider Thomson, Gissing, and Thompson to be "minor" simply because they became writers after "fail[ing] in other pursuits." Trollope is viewed as "a significant minor"[180] in novels for Bowyer and Brooks, and it is interesting that they feel so, because he is now considered a "major" novelist. The Norton anthologies emphasize Carlyle, Tennyson, Browning, Arnold, Hardy, Hopkins and Yeats for study. They mention Wilde in the general introduction, but do not include any of his works.

This "major/minor" author categorization is most obvious with Tennyson and Browning. Bowyer and Brooks say that Tennyson is the greatest poet of the Victorian age. The shift is that now Norton and Oxford consider Browning as a "rival or equal" of Tennyson.[181] Browning is also seen as "the most considerable poet in English since the major Romantics, surpassing his great contemporary rival Tennyson, and the principal twentieth-century poets, including even Yeats, Hardy, and Wallace Stevens."[182] Norton believes that Browning's "most memorable poems" are "Men and Women."[183] Bowyer and Brooks consider his most significant work to be Dramatis Personae.[184] This "rivalry" between Browning and Tennyson is reflected by the fact that both authors are anthologized; you cannot open an anthology of Victorian literature without noticing their inclusion.

There is an alteration in who is considered "Victorian" and "Modern": Bowyer and Brooks, Roe and Norton consider Hardy, Shaw and Yeats to be "Victorian"; Oxford regards them as "Modern". Oxford and Norton divide the era into sections; Bowyer and Brooks and Roe do not. Norton groups Wilde, Hardy, Hopkins, Shaw and Yeats as "twentieth century" writers", Oxford

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[179]Ibid., p. 20.

[180]Ibid., p. 23.

[181]Norton, 1987, p. 2035.

[182]Oxford, p. 1279.

[183]Norton, 1975, p. 2079.

[184]Bowyer & Brooks, 1938, p. 262.

considers them "modern". It is interesting that they are considered to be twentieth century writers, especially since their works span both eras. Bowyer and Brooks and Roe make no distinction between "Victorian" and "Modern" categories.

Attitudes toward women have become more chauvinistic. For Bowyer and Brooks [1938 and 1954] the female writers made great strides:

> The Victorian age includes the first outstanding group of literary women. Among the poets Mrs. Browning, Christina Rossetti, Emily Bronte, and Alice Meynell are noteworthy. Jane Austen had already produced her brilliant novel of manners, but she is followed in the novel by Mrs. Gaskill, Charlotte and Emily Bronte, George Eliot, and many minor figures.[185]

Roe (1947) does not include any female writers in his anthology. With Oxford (1973) and Norton (1987), women are demoted to "minor" status, with Elizabeth Barrett Browning a prime example: "...she seems to us now a lesser figure. . . "[186]

Perceptions as to what makes an author "great" has changed considerably. In 1938, Bowyer and Brooks consider style a pre-requisite for greatness, citing Walter Savage Landor: "Landor lacked great power of connected thinking; he also lacked the highest gift of poetic inspiration. But, he possessed a pure and classic style . . ."[187] They placed a higher value on style rather than substance. Roe emphasizes both style and substance together, giving higher priority to substance. Norton and Oxford, on the other hand, value substance over style, citing Tennyson, Arnold and Browning as major examples.

Bowyer and Brooks recognize the difficulty in describing Victorian writing, especially critically: "In the scope of its materials Victorian literature is as inclusive as the interests of the age and as a

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[185]Bowyer and Brooks, 1954, pp. 20-21.

[186]Norton, 1987, p. 2035.

[187]Bowyer and Brooks, 1954, p. 57.

consequence the writings do not fit snugly into any critical category.[188]

Another factor indicative of changing attitudes is the biographical length of each author; this also shows which works are considered important. For Bowyer and Brooks, Arnold, Huxley and Ruskin each have four - five pages, and include works mentioned in the biographical sketches. As you read farther into these books, the sketches become very brief, or in the case of Shaw, non-existent. Also, they have very little on Hopkins, as do the others. The introductions tends to focus upon his style, rather than his works themselves. Lastly, they move from emphasizing literature to political and social views. They place the greatest emphasis on Tennyson & Browning, as do Norton and Oxford. Roe does not show favoritism - all his biographies are equal in length. Furthermore, he has the best reason for including an author / work in his book:

> The twelve men whose work is represented in this volume are masters of non-fictional prose, the most eminent, all in all, in a time of great writers. In thought, style and influence taken together they reflect the vast range of Victorian thought and movement more effectively than any other group of prose masters could do . . . They tell us, in their various ways, something of the main currents of life and thought running through the period.[189]

The most obvious example of changing views is with the works of Oscar Wilde. "The Ballad of Reading Gaol", his "best poem,"[190] is included in both editions of Bowyer and Brooks. He then disappears from anthologies until Norton and Oxford in the late seventies and early eighties. Bowyer and Brooks comment only on Wilde's aestheticism, not on any of his works: "But aestheticism was itself a passing humor, one of the eccentric forms to which the eighties and nineties extended a welcome. Men like Shaw, Yeats, Max Beerbohm, and George Moore were

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[188]Ibid., p. 21.

[189]Roe, Victorian Prose, p. xi.

[190]Bowyer and Brooks, 1938, p. 785.

affected by it, but quickly passed beyond its range."[191] Norton views Wilde's contributions as diverse:

> His most important work was his critical and dramatic prose and his curiously mannered prose fable, The Picture of Dorian Gray (1891). . . [and his] greatest successes were his plays - Lady Windemere's Fan (1892), A Woman of No Importance (1893), An Ideal Husband (1895), and, best and most brilliant, The Importance of Being Earnest (1894). [192]

When Norton and Bowyer and Brooks discuss Wilde, it is in terms of his dramatic contributions with only passing mention of his critical essays. They do not address his short stories or short novel, The Picture of Dorian Gray. The novel is mentioned briefly in introductions, but is not excerpt in the anthologies. However, Oxford is changing the critical perception of Wilde's works, as evidenced by how they view his career in general:

> Inevitably, such a career puts difficulties in the way of judging the work of the man who pursued it. But these have diminished with the passing of the years - less and less do the extravagances of Wilde's self-dramatization and the pathos of what may fairly be called his martyrdom obscure his quite momentous significance as a writer.[193]

This is good to see, because Bowyer and Brooks (1954) were the last to include Wilde in their anthology, until Norton revived him in the nineteen-sixties. But even then, the revival did not last long. He is not included again until Oxford in 1973.

All the anthologies rank Matthew Arnold according to his essays; Roe ranks him according to both essays and poetry. Bowyer and Brooks, Norton and Oxford acknowledge his poetry and prose, but emphasize the essays. Unlike Norton and Oxford, Roe feels Arnold should have

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[191] Ibid., p. 783.

[192] Norton, 1974, pp. 1695-96.

[193] Oxford, p. 1126.

continued with his poetry: "Had Arnold done all his prose work in this field [poetry] unquestionably his distinction as a critic would be even greater than it is, for he had the rare gift of making his readers feel the significance as well as the charm of literature."[194] No one else considers Arnold's poetry in their anthologies.

Oxford is noteworthy on two accounts: it has a separate introductory sketch for particular works and it includes illustrations from the age; the other anthologies do not. This allows Oxford to give a well-rounded picture of the age, providing the students with visuals enhancing the writings/criticisms.

The theater is discussed, with Bowyer and Brooks having the broadest samples in citing Robertson, Gilbert and Wilde. Norton and Oxford list Shaw and Wilde specifically as contributors, with a passing mention of Gilbert, and none of Robertson. Norton [1962] believes that "Modern drama begins in a sense with the witty drawing-room comedies of Oscar Wilde; yet Wilde founded no dramatic school."[195] This leads to an interesting parallel between Wilde and Shaw:

> The wit of Oscar Wilde's comedies had no specific critical implications; it drew on the conventions of society not in order to expose them but in order to get the maximum number of epigrams out of their delightful inconsistencies and absurdities. Shaw's wit was put at the service of genuine passion for reform, and even if he sometimes assumed the posture of a licensed clown . . . he remained to the end a crusader as well as an entertainer.[196]

Furthermore:

> The theater, throughout the period, was itself a flourishing and popular institution, but despite well-intentioned efforts, the Victorians were generally unsuccessful in creating for it plays of lasting interest (except for the remarkable comic operas of

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[194]Roe, p. 393.

[195]Norton, 1962, p. 1744.

[196]Ibid., p. 1759.

> Gilbert and Sullivan) . . . Only as the century drew to its close did significant writing for the stage re-emerge after long absence, in the lively dramas of Oscar Wilde and George Bernard Shaw.[197]

This is intriguing because Bowyer and Brooks do not discuss a "breakdown" in the theater; they see drama as continuing to contribute throughout the era. Roe does not discuss the theater at all.

It is interesting to compare how the different anthologies categorize the Victorian era: Norton defines it by saying "It may be legitimate to categorize as "Victorian" both the writings of Thomas Carlyle at the beginning of the period and Oscar Wilde at the end, but we should do so with our eyes open to the gap that stretches between the worlds of these two writers."[198] Norton emphasizes that the 1890's is very much separate from the rest of the Victorian period by saying that: "Wilde's decade, the '80's and '90's, . . . can be legitimately overlooked if we are trying to categorize the Victorian age as a whole . . ."[199] The changes within Victorian literature are clearly illustrated:

> The most dramatic illustration of the shift [in the era] is provided by the life and works of Pater's disciple, Oscar Wilde. In Dickens' David Copperfield, the hero affirms: "I have always been thoroughly in earnest." Forty-four years later, Wilde's comedy, The Importance of Being Earnest (1895) turns this typical mid-Victorian word "earnest," into a pun, a key joke in this comic spectacle of earlier Victorian values being turned upside down.[200]

An interesting feature of any of these anthologies is that Dickens' works are included in only Bowyer and Brooks and Norton (1974). Furthermore, only Ford in Norton (1974) accurately relates Dickens to his era: "Dickens has often been characterized as the great recorder of the Victorian age or as one of its major critics, but he was also, in his energetic pursuit of his goals, the embodiment

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[197]Norton, 1974, p. 891.

[198]Norton, 1962, p. 1365.

[199]Ibid., pp. 1371-72.

[200]Norton, 1974, p. 884.

of his age, the archetypal Victorian."[201] Bowyer and Brooks connect Dickens with his era, but only in terms of his social criticism.

The nineties are set apart from the rest of the age, and for Norton, with good reason: "What makes the nineties important as a period of English literary history . . . is their strongly held belief in the independence of art, their view that a work of art had its own unique kind of value - that, in T.S. Eliot's phrase, poetry must be judged "as poetry and not another thing."[202] Norton considers the nineties a "bridge between the two centuries."[203] They and Oxford discuss the end of the age apart from the rest of Victorian literature. Neither Bowyer and Brooks nor Roe make any specific distinction between the "early" writings and those of the end. By not doing so, one cannot clearly see the literary, social, political or theatrical accomplishments of this vast age. This vastness is emphasized by the novelists:

> It will be obvious that any estimate of Victorian literature has to take into account the outstanding achievements of the Victorian novelists. From the time of Charles Dickens . . . early in the period . . . to the final decade when the late novels of Thomas Hardy . . . appeared . . . a long line of novelist continued to turn out monumental masterpieces that delighted their contemporaries and that continue to delight today, as is evident by their being among the most readily available books in English. [204]

"Victorian Poetry" - Oxford compares past and present: "nineteenth-century English poetry is one of the world's major imaginative achievements, almost comparable to the poetry of the English

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[201] Ibid., p. 1212.

[202] Ibid., p. 1694.

[203] Norton, 1987, p. 1892.

[204] Ibid., p. 1908.

Renaissance."[205] Wilde's "The Ballad of Reading Gaol," "given here in curtailed (and thus improved) form [is] his best poem . . .,"[206], is cited as an example, though they continue by saying that Wilde "was a poor poet, though a superb critic and dazzling dramatist."[207] It is as a dramatist that Wilde is most often discussed. Oxford is unique because they discuss his poetry, albeit briefly.

Roe admires Arnold more for his poetry than his prose, which is interesting because the other anthologies in this study place him higher in prose than in poetry - his essays are anthologized and discussed, not his poems. Only Bowyer and Brooks include both modes.

The prevailing attitude toward Victorian literature has shifted from a wide-ranging spectrum of authors, as shown by the works of Bowyer and Brooks, and Roe, to the narrow selections of Norton and Oxford. There are books published today dealing specifically with Victorian literature, but they do not introduce the authors or works, nor present a great selection of pieces. These books also have no background information on the era itself, no mention of history, social changes taking place, nothing that would indicate to the reader the diversity, nor the great changes made. Therefore, it has been left to Oxford and Norton, the basic college anthologies covering several eras in one edition, to introduce students to Victorian literature.

The most comprehensive studies of the era are in Bowyer and Brooks because they include over sixty writers, thereby giving an overall view of the age. Norton, 1974 edition has a good grasp of the age, but focuses on a relatively few authors. The drawback for Norton is that the format and authors chosen have not changed significantly. It is not until the 1987 Major Authors edition that Dickens and Shaw are no longer included in discussion. This is leading to an emphasis on the "common" works, such as Elizabeth Barrett and Robert Browning, Tennyson, Arnold, Hopkins and Hardy. Oxford is a good anthology, though it too is limited in focus. The trend now appears to be a discussion of only a few authors, presenting an overview, but a limited one.

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[205] Ibid., p. 1177.

[206] Ibid., p. 1494.

[207] Oxford, p. 1177.

Discussion of authors has shifted. When Bowyer and Brooks began in 1938, they discussed social, political and literary aspects of the age, and related them to the works included in their anthology. Roe in 1947 did not discuss many of the changes within the era, instead focusing on the selected works and allowing them to speak for the vastness of the age. Norton and Oxford have returned to the practice of including an historical overview of the age, thereby giving the student a better grasp of how these works fit into the historical/literary scheme of the Victorian age.

There is a great deal of scholarship on the Victorian Age available today, although it has moved away from the true anthological form of Norton and Oxford to books such as those listed in the Bibliographical Supplement. These books are criticism of authors in general, tending to encompass the entire canon of English literature, such as The Oxford Illustrated History of English Literature, to Peter Conrad's The History of English Literature: One Indivisible, Unending Book. These books are good in their own right, but do not give a complete picture of the era itself, the tremendous changes taking place in literature and theater. They are more for the casual reader, not the true Victorian scholar.

Section 5

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**Bibliographic Supplement**[208]


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[208]The works cited here are Victorian scholarship, but did not meet the criteria of author/work introductions. Therefore, I had no idea what the editors' standard was for these particular works. They encompass overviews of English literature, critical essays, etc.

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